

JOE WARDY  
MAYOR



## CITY COUNCIL

SUSAN AUSTIN  
DISTRICT NO. 1

ROBERT A. CUSHING, JR.  
DISTRICT NO. 2

JOSE ALEXANDRO LOZANO  
DISTRICT NO. 3

JOHN F. COOK  
DISTRICT NO. 4

DANIEL S. POWER  
DISTRICT NO. 5

PAUL J. ESCOBAR  
DISTRICT NO. 6

VIVIAN ROJAS  
DISTRICT NO. 7

ANTHONY W. COBOS  
DISTRICT NO. 8

SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
AUGUST 9, 2004  
9:00 A.M.

The City Council met at the above place and date at approximately 9:14 a.m. Mayor Joe Wardy present and presiding and the following Council Members answered roll call: Susan Austin, Robert A. Cushing, Jr., John F. Cook, Daniel S. Power, and Anthony Cobos. Absent: Paul J. Escobar. Late arrivals: Jose Alexandro Lozano at 9:17 a.m. and Vivian Rojas at 9:17 a.m.

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**AGENDA**

**FY2005  
\*BUDGET HEARINGS SCHEDULE**

DATE	TIME	DEPARTMENT
Monday, August 9, 2004	9:00 AM	City Attorney Budget Wrap up

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**CITY ATTORNEY DEPARTMENT'S BUDGET HEARING:**

Representatives Cook, Austin, Cobos, Rojas, Power, Lozano and Mayor Joe Wardy asked questions of Ms. Lisa Elizondo, City Attorney on the City Attorney Department's budget and commented.

Representatives Cook, Austin, Cobos, Rojas, Power, Lozano and Mayor Joe Wardy asked questions of Mr. David Almonte, Director of OMB, relative to the City Attorney Department's budget.

Ms. Lisa Turner, citizen, asked whether or not the salary of the City Attorney would be higher than the proposed \$165,000 allocated for the Trial Supervisor. Additionally, she asked questions pertaining to outsourcing the City's 30 trial cases to the law firm of Mounce, Green, Myers, Safi & Galatzan PC, former employer of Ms. Elizondo.

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## **FY2005 BUDGET WRAP UP:**

### **HUMAN RESOURCES:**

Mr. James Sienkiewicz, Classification and Compensation Manager for the Human Resources Department, asked the Council to preserve his job and the jobs of those targeted for layoffs and presented his proposal for doing so.

Ms. Terry Bond, Director of Human Resources, explained the budget and staffing cuts and their anticipated impact. She addressed conversations she had with the CAO on the staffing reductions.

Mayor Wardy asked Ms. Bond questions regarding her assessment of the anticipated impact and disagreed with her assessment.

Representatives Austin, Cobos, and Power asked questions of Ms. Bond and commented on the proposed layoffs.

Mr. Jim Martinez, Chief Administrative Officer, commented on the proposed layoffs.

Mr. David Almonte Director of OMB, commented.

Representative Power commented on the proposed staffing cuts in the Building Permits and Inspections Department, Code Enforcement Division, and relayed his concerns regarding the negative impact on code enforcement. He asked Mr. Almonte questions pertaining to the current staffing within the Mayor's Office and the change in government, with respect to the City Manager.

Mayor Wardy answered that there would be no staffing changes in the Mayor's Office for FY2005.

Representative Austin asked Ms. Bond questions regarding the proposed staffing cuts in the Human Resources Department.

Ms. Bond explained that there are positions available in the City for every person slated for layoff and expounded on seniority factors relative to the layoff procedure.

Representative Cushing asked Ms. Bond as to how she determined the proposed layoffs within the Human Resources Department in meeting the set reduction amount she was given.

Representative Rojas asked Ms. Bond about alternate cuts that could be made other than those identified within the Human Resources Department.

Representative Cook questioned Ms. Bond about the salary for the Classification and Compensation Manager.

Mr. Sienkiewicz addressed comments made by Mr. Martinez regarding the importance of the Classification and Compensation Division and the volume of requests for reclassification.

### **QUALITY OF LIFE SERVICES:**

Reverend Ed Roden-Lucero, Project Arriba/EPISO representative, commented on the importance of the City's investment and funding in Project Arriba. He highlighted Project Arriba's success in graduating 207 individuals from its program and the leveraging of funding Project Arriba utilized to accomplish that. He expounded on the multiple services provided by Project Arriba.

Ms. Dolores Johnson, Project Arriba participant, spoke of the positive impact Project Arriba has had on her education as a registered nurse and on her family.

Ms. Maria Garcia, Project Arriba participant, spoke of the vital assessment Project Arriba has given her in her education as a registered nurse and on her family.

Representative Austin asked Ms. Kathy Cox, Executive Director of Project Arriba, regarding the El Paso Empowerment Zone allocating funding for Project Arriba.

Ms. Cox explained that Project Arriba received full funding from the El Paso Empowerment Zone, limited only by what the Empowerment Zone could provide.

Representative Rojas asked Mr. Almonte what funding sources were available for Project Arriba.

Representative Cobos asked Mr. Almonte from what budget monies would be taken and from what budget the necessary cuts would occur in order that Project Arriba receive funding from the City.

Representatives Cook and Austin asked questions regarding CDBG funding and how that affected Project Arriba's funding.

Mr. Almonte responded that \$120,000 would be deducted from FY04 UDAG monies, additionally, \$28,000 would be deducted from CDBG funding.

Representative Rojas asked Ms. Hamlyn, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer for Quality of Life Services, about the \$120,000 UDAG monies allocated for Project Arriba.

Representative Cobos requested further clarification.

Mr. Tanny Berg, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce representative, spoke about businesses accessing the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce's services and the importance of promoting and supporting entrepreneurship in job creation and local ownership of small business.

Ms. Cindy Ramos-Davidson, President of Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, spoke on the importance of small businesses as a core connection in revitalizing the community. She highlighted the services provided by the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and to whom those services were provided. She stressed the importance of the Chamber's partnership with the City of El Paso to the Chamber's ability to secure grant funding and leveraging.

Representative Cook commented on the Mayor's reason for vetoing the restoration of funding to the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and asked Ms. Ramos-Davidson to respond.

Representative Austin asked Ms. Ramos-Davidson what the \$140,000 was spent on, if it was for technical services provided to non-members of the Hispanic Chamber.

Ms. Elizabeth Romero, Chief Financial Officer for the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, explained that the \$140,000 was 32% of the cost of providing technical assistance to individuals requesting that service; however, she noted that more than 32% of those individuals seeking assistance from the Hispanic Chamber were non-members.

Representative Cobos asked Mr. Almonte when the contract with the Hispanic Chamber would be signed.

Mr. Almonte said the contract would be coming to the Council for approval within the next two weeks.

Mayor Wardy commented on the delay and his veto and explained that the Hispanic Chamber's request for \$140,000 was too early in the process for the City to commit to.

Representative Cobos asked Ms. Ramos-Davidson and Ms. Terri Reed, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce representative, to explain the services provided by the Chamber.

Ms. Reed gave an outline of the services they provide and how financial packaging was beneficial in assisting applicants in securing small business loans and in providing continued support throughout the life of that loan.

Ms. Ramos-Davidson listed several businesses that had received assistance recently from the Chamber in securing their small business loans and stressed how dependent the Chamber was on a partnership with the City.

Mr. Raul Garcia, citizen, expressed his concerns about funding for the summer programs at the recreational centers.

Mayor Wardy asked Ms. Hamlyn to respond.

Ms. Hamlyn explained that no funding cuts were proposed right now and that youth programs were at the top of the priorities.

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Motion made by Representative Cobos, seconded by Representative Rojas and unanimously carried to recess 45 minutes for lunch at 12:13 p.m.

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Motion made by Representative Cushing, seconded by Representative Rojas to reconvene the Special City Council meeting at 1:29 p.m.

Representative Cushing, Cook, Rojas, and Cobos were present.

Representative Lozano was not present but arrived at 1:32 p.m.

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**STREET DEPARTMENT:**

Representative Cushing asked Mr. Almonte to address the double fronted lots.

Mr. Almonte recommended that that discussion be put off until the FY06 Street Department budget hearing.

Representative Cushing asked Mr. Almonte to address the feasibility of donation/fees for graffiti clean up. Representative Cushing advised the Legal Department to research the feasibility issue and asked Mr. Daryl Cole, Director of Streets, to comment on his request for two professional positions and one arborist position for the Street Department.

Mr. Cole commented and responded to questions.

Representative Cobos commented on the feasibility of imposing fees for graffiti clean up and suggested that the fee be included in the water bill. He suggested the possibility of imposing a one time \$10.00 fee and suggested that the Street Department implement a 12-month trial period.

Representative Cook expressed concern about increased graffiti not removed due to the imposition of a fee.

Representative Cushing expressed concern about falling behind the curve regarding graffiti cleanup due to the fee.

Representative Lozano expressed his opposition to the imposition of a fee for graffiti clean up.

Representative Rojas expressed her concern that individuals would not pay a fee to clean up vandalism.

Representative Austin asked about possible crime victims compensation fund reimbursement or about encouraging a donation to Keep El Paso Beautiful from people whose property is cleaned of graffiti.

Representative Cobos expressed his lack of confidence in donations coming through.

Representative Cook asked Mr. Cole about the legality of the Ordinance requiring property owners to maintain their double fronted lots.

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**TAX/COMPTROLLER DEPARTMENTS:**

Representatives Cobos and Austin asked Ms. Carmen Arrieta Candelaria, Comptroller and Mr. Almonte on the main purpose of absorbing the Tax Department into the Comptroller's Office.

Mr. Almonte explained that it would be to increase efficiencies and save a percent of the Deputy Tax Assessor position.

Mr. Bill Chapman, Financial and Administrative Services, explained the proposed changes.

Mr. Almonte stated that any staffing cuts in the Tax Department will save the City 40% rather than the 7% savings identified by Mr. Juan Sandoval, Tax Assessor/Collector. Mr. Almonte later revised the 40% savings amount to 31%.

Ms. Arrieta Candelaria, explained how she would pass on the costs of positions in her department to the taxing entities if they perform duties related to the Tax Department (in the Computer Applications Department).

Representative Austin asked Ms. Arrieta Candelaria how this accounting could be done given that the positions currently are dedicated solely to the Comptroller's work.

Mr. Sandoval disagreed with the 31% figure presented by Mr. Almonte during Representative Austin's questioning. He reiterated his belief it would be 7% savings average.

Representative Austin asked why the City would be paying 31% of the Tax Department budget if the City was supposed to be paying only its pro rata share since that amount is less than 31%.

Representative Cobos asked Messrs. Almonte and Sandoval questions relative to figures provided to the Council.

Mr. Sandoval explained that he was trying to keep the consolidated Tax Office as an autonomous, independent department as it was his belief that an autonomous Tax Department serves the entities and citizens most efficiently.

Representative Cobos questioned Mr. Sandoval regarding the delinquent tax collection contract with Delgado, Acosta, Spencer, Linebarger, Heard & Perez, LLP.

Mr. Sandoval explained that the City has contracts with 24 other taxing entities.

Representative Cushing asked Ms. Arrieta Candelaria on the commonality of functions between the two departments and what the dis-similarities were. He asked her if there would be any loss of efficiency in combining the two departments.

Ms. Arrieta Candelaria explained that she sees no loss of efficiency.

Representative Austin asked Ms. Arrieta Candelaria if she deals with any other government entities, if she manages any other interlocal agreements and if she collects any funds for other government entities. She asked where the idea of consolidating the two departments derived from.

Ms. Arrieta Candelaria explained that the idea was Mr. Chapman's.

Mr. Sandoval reiterated his belief that the Tax Department needs to remain an autonomous, independent operation.

Representative Lozano questioned Mr. Chapman on why he is proposing the consolidation of the Tax Department within the Comptroller's Department.

Mr. Chapman explained it was for improved efficiencies.

Representative Rojas asked Mr. Chapman if it is possible to charge the other entities more.

Mr. Chapman explained that the charge to the other taxing entities is determined upon actual costs.

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**PARKS & RECREATION:**

Dr. Norman Merrifield, Director of Parks & Recreation, answered Representative Cushing as to the assumption of County parks being maintained by the City.

Dr. Merrifield explained it would be an additional cost and commented on the following:

- Deposit required from users of parks as security against trash left after usage;
- Task Masters Industries contract – no decision made yet as to a reduction in this or other contracts.

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**BUILDING PERMITS & INSPECTIONS:**

Mr. Alan Shubert, Director of Building Permits & Inspections, commented on consulting fees.

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**OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET:**

Mr. David Almonte, Director of OMB, commented on health benefits for the elected judges and noted the amount as \$21,000.

Ms. Richarda Duffy Momsen, Municipal Clerk, informed the Council these are six, not five, elected judges: five trial judges and one appellate judge.

Representatives Austin, Cobos and Cushing asked questions of Ms. Momsen and Messrs. Almonte and Chapman relative to the collection agency fees.

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## **HUMAN RESOURCES:**

Representatives Cushing, Rojas and Cobos commented on the proposed layoff of the Civil Service Commission recorder position.

Mr. Almonte provided comments on this proposed cut.

## **BRAC/CHAMBER CONTRACT:**

BRAC/Chamber contract equaled \$20,000 in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter in 2003.

Mr. Adrian Ocegueda, Executive Assistant to the Mayor, explained and answered questions of Representative Cushing. Council Members asked for more information on the BRAC/Chamber Contract.

## **SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT:**

Mr. Jim Martinez, Chief Administrative Officer, explained the R.W. Beck Management Study recommendation will be brought to the Solid Waste Legislative Review Committee meeting for further discussion.

## **MAYOR & COUNCIL:**

Representative Austin asked about the \$77,000 increase.

Representative Cushing commented on the desire to equalize the funding for the districts.

Mr. Almonte commented.

Representative Lozano commented.

Representative Rojas commented on the need for equity regarding discretionary funding.

Representative Cobos asked what discretionary funds the Mayor receives.

Mr. Almonte explained that the Mayor receives no discretionary funds.

Representative Austin asked about the four month of Chief Administrative Officer salary for the transition period to City Manager form of government. She asked if the Council could budget for one month during that transition period.

Mr. Almonte explained it is about \$74,000 for both Mr. Martinez and his Executive Assistant for that four-month period.

Mayor Wardy arrived at 3:10 p.m. and suggested budgeting for two months during that transition period.

Mr. Martinez urged the Council to preserve the \$1.8 million in salary reserve for a weather disaster or other emergency and in case a crisis results from the City-County Health and Environmental District budget.

Messrs. Almonte and Martinez gave an update on the City-County Health and Environmental District.

Mayor Wardy, Representatives Austin and Cook commented.

Mayor Wardy explained that the City would be preparing a City Health Department model.

## **SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

**FY2005 BUDGET HEARING FOR CITY ATTORNEY & BUDGET WRAP UP – AUGUST 9, 2004**

Representative Cushing asked Mr. Almonte if the City could continue to receive state funding through grants while providing services within the City limits only.

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**PROPOSED BUDGET RESOLUTION ITEM #34 – PARKING METER FUNDS**

Representative Austin asked if the dedication of parking meter revenue to the Plaza Theatre was still needed.

Mr. Chapman explained it was.

Representative Cobos questioned Mr. Almonte on the \$90,000 savings in security expenditures and whether or not that amount had been backed out of the budget.

Mr. Almonte responded yes.

Representative Cook commented that it would no longer be necessary to send the five Code Compliance Officers to the Health District. He asked for the fund balance amount for FY04.

Mr. Chapman responded that the fund balance is \$21 million in the General Fund balance and explained that \$8 to \$10 would be used for FY04.

Mr. Chapman gave a PowerPoint presentation addressing the Debt Service fund and \$10 million in commercial paper. He explained the savings to the citizens by using commercial paper.

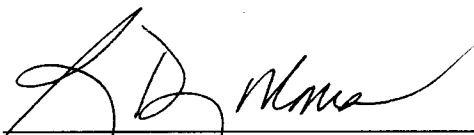
Representative Austin left the meeting at 3:49 p.m.

Representative Lozano asked Mayor Wardy and Mr. Chapman questions on the City's credit limit and total debt service.

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Motion made by Representative Cushing, seconded by Representative Cobos and unanimously carried to adjourn this meeting at 3:55 p.m.

AYES: Representatives Cushing, Lozano, Cook, Rojas, and Cobos  
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**APPROVED AS TO CONTENT:**

  
Richarda Duffy Momsen, City Clerk